

4325.C No 1.
K. Stubbs (P.)

A

DISCOURSE

OF

BAPTISM,

IN

ANSWER to the Reverend Mr. Stubbs's

SERMON

OF

PUBLICK BAPTISM.

Matt. XVIII. 20.

*Wherever Two or Three are met together in my Name, I will
be in the Midst of them.*

L O N D O N:

Printed in the Year, 1705.



A

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OF

BAPTISM, &c.

THere is nothing of more real Service to Truth and True Religion, and consequently to Christianity, than the liberty of examining into the Reasons, upon which all propositions by whomsoever propos'd are pretended to be supported; whether they be what are fit for a Rational Creature to be acquainted with, as having a remote or immediate Relation to the good of Society; or whether they concern a Man, as looking towards a future Immortal State; because Christianity has not only the Advantage of all other Religions, and Truth the Advantage of falshood, were they but once upon the same level; but because Christians would act consistently with their own Principles, by propagating their Opinions in the same way, that the Wise Author thought fit to introduce them into the World, who cou'd as well have establish'd his Religion by Law in one, or in all Countries, and consequently, have laid an obligation on every one to submit to that Religion that was establish'd by Law in one Country, or to be of the Religion that was establish'd by Law in every Country had he judg'd *that* a proper Method to take with a Rational Creature. And as in order to be consistent with our selves as Christians, we are oblig'd to *call no Man, Master*; so we are likewise, as Protestants, who have separated our selves from all the Church Powers in

the World, because we did believe, in our private judgments, that all Churches that call'd themselves *Christian*, had deprav'd Christianity by additions of their own Traditions, and absurd interpretations of those Books that were caus'd to be Written by our Great Lord and Master, for the sole rule of our Faith and Life, which are so plain and easie, that no one, of how low capacity soever, can fail of understanding, so far as is necessary to the great end for which they were design'd.

And as there is nothing of more Advantage to Christianity than a liberty of examining into Opinions, so there is nothing has a more direct tendency towards establishing a free examination of Opinions, than answering in Print, what but one sort of Men have a liberty to speak publicly from the Pulpit, least the insinuations so very common in the Prayer before Sermon, should induce People to believe, that whatever they hear in that place is the *Word of God*, and the silence of the Priests, in allowing the Laity a Right to Judge of all that they say, to approve or reject it as they deem it agreeable or disagreeable to Scripture or Reason; and in letting them know, that it is inconsistent with the duty of a Christian to depend on their Words, should make well meaning People part with their Christian Liberty, by paying a blind Obedience to those, whom we ought the more to suspect, upon account of the Interest they have to lead us into their several perswasions. I proceed therefore without any further Apology, to throw in my *Mite* towards introducing the True Christian Principle of *Trying the Spirits*; and shall examine a Sermon that I lately met with of Mr. *Stubs's*, concerning Publick Baptism; which contains in it a great many propositions, inconsistent with Christianity, the Protestant Religion, and particularly against the private Judgment of every Christian, which the sequel of this discourse will plainly manifest to the Reader.

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Mr. *Stubs's* Text is, *Go ye therefore and Teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. From which Words, he says, He shall take occasion to speak of these five Heads:*

1. *Of the Nature of Baptism.*
2. *Of the Persons here Authoriz'd to Baptize.*
3. *Of the Persons to be Baptiz'd.*

4. *Of*

4. Of the Form of Baptism.

5. Of the time and place when and where this Sacrament ought to be administred.

Of the four first, he says, he shall say but little, there being no difference either as to Principle or Practice among those of our Communion. But in opposition to this affirmation of a falshood in fact, I who acknowledge my self of his Communion, shall shew him wherein I differ from him; and if he will take my word, I can assure him there are several others of the same perswasion with me. However, my single assertion overthrows his general proposition, as much as if I had a Cloud of Church-men to attelt their agreement with me, in thinking Mr. Stubs mistaken. I proceed to examine that little Mr. Stubs has said on those Four Heads. I agree with him, that Baptism signifies properly an Immersion, dipping or washing all over in water, and that that was part of the Idea signifi'd by the word Baptism, in the Institution of our Blessed Saviour, and consequently whoever performs not all that is contain'd in the Institution, can no more say that he Baptizes, than a Man can say with truth, that he has Travail'd from London to York, who never went beyond Lincoln. And as the latter will be look'd on as a Great Liar, if he will affirm himself to have Travail'd from London to York, when he knows he was not beyond Lincoln, and is satisfi'd that York lies several Miles beyond Lincoln, so the other will put a very odd ingredient into his Character, who owns, that Christ bid him Baptize or Immerse all Nations, and professes to follow Christ, and yet uses sprinkling. But Mr. Stubs urges in behalf of a practice own'd by him, to be contrary to the Precept of our Blessed Saviour: That Immersion is not so necessary, but it may be omitted in favour to the weakness of the Person to be Baptiz'd, and sprinkling us'd instead of it; because God takes care of our Bodies as well as our Souls; and that it is not imagin'd that God should require any thing of us injurious to our Healths. To which I answer, That this is directly disowning Divine Revelation, and setting up Humane Reason against it, in supposing a better direction of our Actions than the Word of God, and in effect, denying God's Power to make Immersion not injurious to us, upon supposition that he requires us not to do any thing injurious to our Healths; for if he requires us not to do any thing injurious to our Healths, or the

the Healths of others, and at the same time requires to dip Children all over in Water, is it not more becoming a Divine, or indeed, any one who calls himself a Christian, to act agreeably to our Saviour *Jesus Christ's* Commands, when he knows what his Commands are, than to give reasons for not obeying him in what is granted to be Commanded, especially, when a reliance upon God Almighty would be a sufficient answer to all such excuses, for disobeying him?

In the Second place, suppose Immersion was injurious to our Healths, is not God, when he commands dipping, as much to be obey'd, as when he commanded circumcision? Is not Mortification enjoyn'd us? Are we not to refrain from excessive Drinking, how long soever we have practic'd it, when, it may be, Death it self will sooner follow upon breaking in upon such a fix'd Habit, than if we continu'd in that Wicked Course of Life? And is not Death it self enjoyn'd us for the sake of *Jesus Christ* and his Gospel, which yet is evidently more injurious to our Healths than Immersion?

In the Third place, The Subjects of Baptism being according to Mr. *Stubs*, Adult Persons and Children, Immersion is so far from being injurious to the Healths of Adult Persons, that in the Judgment of several Learned Physicians, and particularly of Sir *John Floyer*, in his late *Discourse of Cold Baths*, it is highly beneficial; and the wonderful cures lately wrought by reviving the practice of dipping among us, are the strongest confirmation imaginable of their Judgment, and of the Weakness of Mr. *Stubs's*, in supposing Immersion, or Dipping, injurious to their Healths. Now if this that I have asserted, be true, it plainly follows, though we were at liberty to break Christ's Commands, upon a suppos'd injuriousness to our Healths, yet in the case of Adult Persons, that pretence is at an end, and consequently, according to Mr. *Stubs's* own reasoning, we ought to conform to the Precept of our Saviour; For if Immersion may only be omitted when it is injurious to our Healths, it plainly follows, that it ought to be practic'd whenever it is beneficial; unless Mr. *Stubs* will say, *That Immersion may be omitted, in Favour of the weakness of the Person to be Baptiz'd, and Sprinkling us'd instead of it*, is a good reason for omitting Immersion, when Immersion is Advantageous to the Person to be Baptiz'd. As to the Case of Children, who may be Judg'd too tender,

tender, and unable to bear this usage, I shall cite the words of an *Ingenious Author*, who speaks after this manner, in his *Thoughts of Education*, p. 11. 'Let them Examine what the *German*s of old, and the *Irish* now do to their Children; and they will find, that Infants too, as tender as they are thought, may, without any danger, endure Bathing, not only of their Feet, but of their whole Bodies in cold Water: And there are Lady's in the Highlands of *Scotland*, who use this discipline to their Children in the midst of Winter; and find that cold Water does them no harm, even when there is Ice in it.

In the Fourth place, Mr. *Stubs* acknowledging that Baptism was perform'd by Immersion, in the place where this precept of our Saviours to baptize all Nations was given, and admitting of Sprinkling only in *Cold Countries*, such as our *Northern* ones are, condemns the practice of the Church of *England* in all those Countries and Dominions that submit to her; whose climates have the same degrees of warmth, or greater than *Palestine*, the Country where Our Saviour gave forth his Commands; and consequently the Church of *England*, either does not command Sprinkling upon Mr. *Stubs's* reason, or else Acts inconsistent with one of the reasons of her own Practice, since where the reason fails, viz. *The Coldness of the Climate*, she enjoyns the same thing that she does where she has that reason.

In the Fifth and last place, to Answer Mr. *Stubs* effectually, and take of all objection on account of the Coldness of the Climate, let the Water into which Children are Immersed, be but warm'd, and then the precept of our Saviour may take place consistently with Mr. *Stubs's* supposition of Cold water being dangerous in our *Northern Countries*; and let him not say that warm Water is inconsistent with the precept of our Saviour, till he can prove that such a particular degree of Coldness is necessary to make water fit for Baptism.

The Second Head of Mr. *Stubs's* Sermon is, of the Persons here Authoriz'd to Baptize; and those he observes were the *Apostles*, and that for the effectual continuance of this power to the end of the World, Our Blessed Saviour Authoriz'd the *Apostles* to delegate and depute this power to others in this large and plenary commission, As my Father sent me, so send I you. As if he had said, I give you the same Authority which I have receiv'd; And as I had the Power

of my Father, to send you forth to Preach the Gospel, and baptize every Creature; So I give you Power to send others forth with the same Commission, to ordain Bishops, Priests and Deacons, &c. To all which I answer, that tho' the Command of Go Teach and Baptize all Nations, was particular to the Apostles, yet that Command does not forbid others taking upon 'em the offices that were so particularly enjoyn'd on them; because it does not assign any particular qualification as necessary to perform what our Saviour Commands, but what others might have without being particularly spoke to, if there were any willing to be Taught and Baptiz'd by them; and the Apostles themselves could not teach those that fled from 'em and avoided 'em. Our Saviour, when he took the Supper with his Disciples only, and bid them *do this in remembrance of him*, did not confine the Lords Supper to the Priests only, but made it a Duty incumbent on all Christians: And yet there seems to be as much reason to confine the taking of the Lords Supper to the order of Priesthood only, as there is to confine Teaching and Baptizing only to them, since those only are spoke to in both places, whom on account of their being only spoke to in one place, a Power is pretended to be set up, exclusive of all others but themselves, how many calls soever they may have from their fellow Christians to accept of a service and labour of Love, that by their knowledge in the Holy Scriptures they are able and willing to perform. But since the Apostles power to Teach and Baptize is not doubted, let us see how he undertakes to prove the conveyance of that Power, to a particular Set of men exclusive of others (for unless he performs that, he can never, upon his own principles, prove himself a Priest,) and that is by a Text of Scripture that only sends the Apostles, as another Text bids them only receive the Lords Supper in remembrance of their Master: for these words, *As my Father sent me, so send I you*, have not a syllable in 'em about the conveyance of that Power from the Apostles; and serves no more our Author's purpose, than the proofs of *Adam's* being a Monarch by Divine Right, will support the Divine Right of any Prince upon Earth, without a proof of the Divine Right of conveyance of that Power. But this Author can make a shift to spell *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, out of this; but this signifies nothing to his purpose, unless he can spell out of this, *Archbishops, Deans, and Archdeacons*, as well as *Bishops, Priests,*

Priests and Deacons, and prove that the powers of the several Governours of our Church, are the same with those in the times of the Apostles ; and that a particular kind of conveyance is necessary to give 'em that power, and that that conveyance has been the way whereby they have obtain'd the power they stand possess'd of.

Secondly, I answer, that a Power in one set of Men, exclusive of others to Teach, Baptize, give the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, or perform any other Office in what is call'd Church Government, is inconsistent with Christianity and the Protestant Religion. It is inconsistent with Christianity, in that it will exclude many from the Church, (for Men so and so qualifi'd, are made necessary, according to Mr. *Stubs*, to the being of a Christian Church) who sincerely take the Scriptures for the sole Rule of their Faith, and endeavour to understand them in the sense they think God intended, and to obey Gods will as far as they can attain to the knowledge of it, and who may be as well in the Right as in the Wrong in refusing to submit to their Church Governors, who are so far from being infallible, (which is the only pretence for such a Church Power as our Author would set up,) that so great has been the prevalency of Error over the Christian World, that there has been a time when there was no Christian Church, that had any Members with the qualifications that Mr. *Stubs* requires, that one that was Sound in the Faith of Jesus Christ, could joyn in Communion with ; but on the contrary, the maintenance of several Errors as Truths, was necessary for a Good Man to keep him in the true Church, and consequently in the way to Salvation ; and so all those, who by the Spirit of God concurring with their endeavours, have, according to their Master's Will, search'd the Scriptures, and found out the several Truths of Christianity, and the Errors that abounded among their Church Governors, shall be Damn'd for being in the Right, and Cast into Hell for fulfilling Gods Will, by calling no Man Master, and finding the Truth which they sought in the love of it. But supposing these searchers after Truth should fall into some Errors, and so be oblig'd to Worship God separately from that Church, which would impose some Truths upon them, which they cannot help supposing to be Errors ; the Case is all the same : because Errors

can do no hurt to minds so dispos'd as I have describ'd ; for that would make God require Impossibilities of us , and guilty of that strange Tyranny in expecting Brick where he gives no Straw ; that is, have us to be free from all Error when he has made us fallible : and our several Educations, unavoidable prejudices, our different capacities and opportunities of searching after Truth, make it almost impossible for us, not to maintain several Errors. So that in Truth, if we believe God will deal with Men according to their Sincerity and Impartiality, that is, believe him to be just, we must conclude that the sincere and impartial will not fail of the reward of Truth, though they fall into Error.

Secondly, It is inconsistent with the Protestant Religion , in that, it destroys the liberty of every ones judging for himself, (which is the foundation upon which the Protestant Cause stands,) for if that set of Men, so much contended for, impose something false upon their fellow Christians , of the fallhood of which those Christians are satisf'd, as the Terms of being Taught, being Baptiz'd, and receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper ; and will Ordain none but those that will require the same Terms , which cannot be complied with by Honest Men and Good Christians ; then those Christians must be Damn'd if they separate themselves from their Erroneous Teachers ; and will most certainly be Damn'd if they continue in the Church, and act inconsistent with their own Judgment, and Sin against the Light of their own Consciences, by professing to believe, what they know or believe to be false ; and consequently, all private Judgment is destroy'd : For if I ought not to follow my Judgment when I am in the Right, much less ought I when I am in the Wrong ; and so I am to be led blindfold according to the direction of the Priest, without a Judgment of discretion of my own. To keep up an Ecclesiastical Power to Controul over the Minds and Consciences of Men, I have heard the Patrons of that Power urge, *That the Clergy have a Power to Reform ; but that Lay Men have no Authority to call in Question the Decision of the Church.* To which I answer, by desiring a Rule for a Private Christian to walk by ; whether he is to submit to his Parish Priest, to a Diocesan Assembly of the Clergy, to a Provincial Assembly of the Clergy, to a National Assembly , or to the Representative General of all the

the Clergy in the World? And if this last be deny'd as a Rule for us to walk by, as I presume it will be, since the majority of the Priests, so qualify'd as Mr. *Stubs* requires, hold many things that we of the Church of *England* esteem to be Errors; I would know by what Authority any of the rest come by the power laid claim to, since the Arguments made use of, to destroy the Authority of General Assemblies of the Clergy, will, in my judgment, equally conclude against all their lesser Assemblies?

Mr. *Stubs* Third particular is, *Of the Persons to be Baptiz'd*: I pass over his First Paragraph, and will say nothing to such stuff as this, *That God caus'd the Waters of Baptism to extend themselves as far as those of the Deluge; that as all Men had once Perish'd by Water, so they should be sav'd by it*: But that how good Preaching soever this may be esteem'd, I'm sure there is no reasoning in it. He wou'd endeavour to prove Infants are the Subjects of Baptism, as well as others that are most certainly included in the words, *all Nations*, and lays his stress upon the word *All* by saying, *when we use the words, All Men, we do not exclude Children*. I grant sometimes we do not exclude Children when we say, *All Men*; but I say sometimes we do exclude Children when we use the words *All Men*; and consequently, no argument can be drawn from the meer use of the words, *All Nations*, for the admission or exclusion of Infants. That must be determin'd by something else, which ought to restrain or extend the sense of the word *All*. But Mr. *Stubs* urges *The Belief and Practice of the Universal Church in all Ages*. I desire him to produce Authorities for the Belief and Practice of Infant Baptism during the Apostles times, or confess that he cannot. And if he cannot, I ask him what he means by the *Universal Church*? and then to prove that the Universal Church in his sense, ought to be follow'd in whatever they believe and practice.

But what need is there to talk of the Universal Church in all Ages for the proof of a Christian Principle, when all Men that are Christians are willing to be concluded by the Apostles belief and practice in this particular; and when without that, the proof of its being believ'd and practic'd in the remaining Ages of the Church signifies nothing, and if it has the Apostles Belief and Practice, it is not at all strengthened by

the Belief and Practice of after Ages, among those who in matters of Religion will believe in no body but Jesus Christ and his Apostles. All that Mr. *Stubs* says further, is an Answer to an Argument of the Anabaptists against Infant Baptism founded on teaching, being prescrib'd as well as baptizing; to which he answers, *That the true meaning of the Original is, make Disciples.* And what then? How does this prove that teaching is not necessary before Baptism, and is not included in the Greek word that is suppos'd to stand for, *make Disciples*, which may amount to the *English* Translation, *Teach and Baptize*; which Mr. *Stubs* does in effect own to favour the Anabaptists, since he is forced, in order to answer their Argument, to make a different Translation. However, supposing it is a false Translation, and that *make Disciples* is a true one, and stands for Mr. *Stubs's* meaning, I cannot see how Mr. *Stubs* can lay any blame on Men who understand only their Mother Tongue; or even on Scholars, for understanding that Text, as the Church of *England* thought fit to Translate it, and continues to reprint it in the several Editions of the Bible that are every day publish'd.

Mr. *Stubs's* Fourth Head is, *Of the Form of Baptism*; which as Mr. *Stubs* explains it, amounts to being Baptiz'd into the belief of *Three Persons, in one incomprehensible Godhead.* But what ground has Mr. *Stubs* from this Text to bring in *one incomprehensible Godhead*? Here are three mentioned, but not one Word of summing them up in to one. I deny not the Doctrine of the Trinity, but I deny that any Unity to our Author's purpose follows from this Text, Methinks the best way of understanding this Form, I supposing it to be a Form prescrib'd, (for of that many doubt from *Eusebius* the famous Ecclesiastical Historian's quoting this Text Nine times in several parts of his Works, but never with the words, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; but reading thus, *Teach all Nations in my Name, instructing them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*; as well as from the frequent mention of a different form of words, us'd in Baptism, viz, *Acts. 2. 38. Acts 8. 16. Acts 10. 48. Acts 19. 5. Rom. 6. 3. Gal. 3. 27. 1 Cor. 1. 13. Baptizing in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, together with the silence of the other Evangelists, in mentioning St. *Matthew's* Form of Administration of Baptism, and the different

different practice of the Apostles, who only Baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord Jesus, as appears from the citations already mention'd. But I say, supposing it to be a form prescrib'd, the best way of understanding this form, is to compare it with the other forms us'd by the Apostles: which may with reason be suppos'd to stand for the same meaning with St. *Matthew's* Form, tho' St. *Matthew's* be a more explicit determination of the meaning of being Baptiz'd into the Name of Jesus. And it is very likely, it will be thought so by all those that understand St. *Matthew's* according to the Reverend Mr. Samuel Clark's Paraphrase, 386.

' raphrase, ' Goye therefore and Preach the Gospel to all the
' World; making Disciples out of every Nation, and Bapti-
' zing them with Water in the Name of the Father, and of the
' Son, and of the Holy Ghost: That is, receiving them to a
' Profession of the Belief, and an obligation to the Practice of
' that Religion which God the Father has revealed and taught
' by the Son, and confirm'd and establish'd by the Holy Ghost.

I come now to the *Fifth* and main Head, of Mr. *Stubbs's* Sermon, *Of the time and place, when and where this Sacrament ought to be Administred*: Which according to Mr. *Stubbs*, are those places call'd *Fonts* in the Parochial Churches of *England*, when the Congregation is met, unless it be in cases of necessity. He owns his Text is not strictly producible; but yet he thinks, *That, in consort with some others, ought to determine mens choice, such as these, Let all things be done decently and in order: Let all things be done to Edifying.* But of what force are these Texts to prove that Baptism in Families, or properly speaking, Churches in Houses may not be perform'd decently and to edifying? As they are far from containing any such proposition, so much less do they prove that way which the present Church of *England* uses at the *Font*, to be the only decent way of performing the Sacrament; and if it be not the only decent way, then it cannot exclude other ways of Administring Baptism that are decent, upon pretence of decency. But he urges, *that this being a Rule given to the Church, the Church has a Power to apply this Rule in the case before us.* In Answer to this, I ask him what he means by the word *Church*? till that be determin'd, his Discourse is loose and wild, and will catch none but those who are to be impos'd on by common specious words, without a settled Signification.

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For suppose the word *Church* stood for all the People that were Christians, and met either in one or several places in *Corinth*, tho' it is most likely there was but one meeting Place or Church there, then all Christians have an equal Power to apply this Rule, and wherever two or three meet together for any matter of Religion, they have a right by Virtue of these Texts, to perform what they intend to do, in the way that they think decent. None of these Texts give a Power to one particular set of Men, to judge what is decent for others in Church matters nor indeed any other Texts; till it can be shown the word Church, in any place of the *New Testament*, stands for the Pastors of the Church only. For if such a Power was plac'd in one Man over others, Men must be oblig'd to Worship in ways jug'd by them to be indecent; for no pretence of decency in the Imposer, can make a Man that thinks an Action indecent, judge it becomes decent by Imposition. Mr. S. urges the Authority of the Church of *England*, who in her Twentieth Article says, *The Church has Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies not repugnant to the Word of God*; I have nothing to say against this, if the Word Church stands for a Society of Men, that may decree Rites and Ceremonies for themselves; but if it stands for any Power in the Clergy, I expect other proof than the *say so*, or Authority of any Church in the World. It may be Mr. S. will wonder I should suppose the word Church in the Twentieth Article, should stand for such a meaning as I seem to assign it; but for Answer to that, I shall give the definition of the Word Church in a preceding Article, which is, *A Congregation of Christian People, where the pure Word of God is Preach'd, and the Sacraments duly Administred*; and therefore it is very reasonable, after such a definition, to take it in that sense rather than in another, that is not, and it may be, cannot be declared; I say, cannot be declar'd: For supposing the word Church, in the Twentieth Article, stands for a particular order of Men with Power over others, I ask who they be? And whether they are the Men that do decree the Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of *England*? When Mr. S. has Answer'd these questions, it will soon appear what a perfect jumble, at bottom, all Church Power is, and how inconsistent the Principle, of the Clergies being *jure Divino* Governours of the Church, is with our *English* Constitution. But Mr. S. proposes to be more Methodical,

dical, and reduces what he has to say to Four Heads, which to do him justice, I shall set down ; and then examine what he says under each of em.

The First, is, *The express Orders of the Church of England, for Publick Baptism.*

2. *That the Church has acted Wisely, and her constitution in this is agreeable to the Practice of the Eastern and Western Churches.*

3. *That the Practice of all these Churches is grounded upon the earliest Antiquity.*

4. *That that Antiquity has no less Solid basis than the firmest reasons to support it.*

As to the First Head, I agree with Mr. *Stubs*, That the Orders of what he calls the Church of *England*, are express for the Baptism he requires, and consequently there lies an obligation on all her Clergy to admit none to the Sacrament of Baptism, but those that come to the *Font*, unless it be in a case of necessity, but what obligation does this lay on the Laity? The Clergy, when they Baptize otherwise than as they have sworn to practice, are no doubt guilty of a very great fault, and do discover how they are acted by poor little ends to the breach of their duty; but the Laity may act as they think fit, till it be determin'd what the Church of *England* is, that orders; whence arises any obligation to obedience to those for whom the words Church of *England* stands. For if those who are meant by the Church of *England* are not the Men that order these matters, and neither they nor those that do order these matters have any Authority to direct others, then in Baptizing at Home we do not break the orders of the Church of *England*; and if we did break the Orders of the Church of *England*, we should only resist an Authority that has no right to Command. But Mr. *S.* says, *the sense of the Church is enough to oblige every true Son of hers.* When Mr. *S.* tells us what he means by *true Son*, it will soon be known how far they ought to be oblig'd. I will grant, that if *true Sons* are those that believe in every word of the Liturgy, they may think themselves oblig'd; but if by *true Son*, be meant all those that come to Church, hear Prayers and Sermons, receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and yet allow no

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Authority in any Church, then her *true Sons* are not oblig'd. Least these last should be thought very improperly to be Sons of a Church, I desire Mr. S. to set up any Power or Authority in Mother Church, whereby there ought to be any Sons of a Church in Mr. S---'s sense; and consequently, no Sons in the sense of all Christians, having equal Authority with one another. Mr. S. urges something further under this Head, which will be of no use to him, till he shows us wherein a Church consists, and whether a House of Stone or Brick made after such or such a peculiar manner, with a Steeple and Bells in it, be necessary to the being of a Church. When he has determin'd these matters according to his Scheme, it will then be time enough to own, that our Saviour's saying, *Where Two or Three are met together in my Name, there I am in the midst of 'em*, signifies only a Church in time of Persecution, and not a Church in the Scripture sense every where to the end of the World. His Second and Third particulars are only Authorities, which I shall not give the Reader the trouble of showing that none of 'em prove his point; but only observe, that the Fathers he quotes liv'd not in the first Century, and so serve not in the least to lead us into the practice of the Apostles, which after all, could not be known from the practice of a great part of the first Century; so early did Corruption prevail. I proceed to his last particular, wherein the main of what he says is contain'd, *That Publick Baptism, in his sense, is founded on Reason.*

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His First Reason is, *That publick Baptism is more for Edification.* But he gives no reason for this, but the Authority of an *Ancient Canon, in the Year 517; of the English Liturgy; and the form of Administring Baptism in the French Reform'd Church*, who affirm, That is more for Edification from the Numbers present. In answer to this, I observe that according to him, Publick Baptism is Baptism at the Font in our Churches, when our Congregation is met; now if there are more present at a Gossiping at Home, than will come to the Font, then the reason falls, taken from the greatest Numbers, and that it will frequently happen so in Country Churches when the Weather is bad, or the House at a distance from that House call'd the Church; or when the Gossips prefer chatting with one another to the Service of the Church; that must be fetch'd too far

far to incline them to attend it : And therefore sometimes Baptism at a House may be a more Publick Baptism, if the word publick has regard to the Numbers of People present ; and consequently more for Edification. But if Baptism, the more publick it is , the more it is for Edification, be a good Argument for publick Baptism in his sense ; his Argument will prove too much, since there are several places more publick than the Fonts in Churches ; and consequently, whatever can be said against Baptism on account of their being but Two or Three Witnesses present, will equally conclude against the Baptism of the Font, since there are in the World more publick places, that is, where more People are Assembled, than there are at Fonts in Churches, and consequently more for Edification ; since Edification is greater or less, in proportion to the Numbers being greater or less that are present. But not to reason any longer upon false suppositions, I shall declare the whole truth of this matter. A Church is a voluntary Society for the Worship of God, after that manner which the Society thinks most agreeably to him : No determinate large number of People, can be said to be necessary to make such a Society or Church ; but there is a Church so long as there's Two People left to assemble together for the Worship of God. That Baptism ought to be Publick, I grant ; but then all Baptism is publick, that is perform'd before Witness, who may attest any ones admission into a Church, if it be doubted by any one ; and if this is not properly publick Baptism, I desire Mr. *Stubs* to Name the Number of Men necessary to constitute Baptism Publick. But it may be, Mr. *Stubs* will say, that such and such places that are Consecrated with Fonts in 'em, are necessary to make Baptism properly Publick. But in answer to this, I desire a warrant from Scripture, to prove that the setting apart one place for Worship, Baptism, &c. excludes the setting apart another ; or vests a power in one body of Men, to set a part places more than others, much less for others. Now if there is as equal right of Consecration in one body of Men as another, than a House is as much Consecrated or set apart for Devotion, as those places call'd Churches. But it will be said, that no places are properly set apart that are ever allow'd for other uses, as Rooms in Houses are, by being only occasional Churches. To

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which

which I answer, that then there are properly no such places as Churches; because none of those places call'd Churches, but are used to other purposes. For instance, People walk backwards and forwards in 'em, for the same reasons that they walk backwards and forwards in their Parlors; talk about worldly affairs in them; come to 'em on purpose to see the Pictures in 'em; settle the Parish Rates in 'em; and in several Churches in the Country there are Schools taught. And in St. Mary's at Cambridge in Commencement time, the Spectators are regald with Jestings and Bawdy; so that the Publick Churches as they are call'd, are equally unchurch'd, if the doing of other business besides Worshipping God, takes off from the Appropriation or Consecration.

If it be said there is less business foreign from the Worship of God, done in the Churches than in Houses, I ask, how much business is necessary to unchurch a Church? If no answer can be given to this, then it is plain there is no distinction between a House and a Church; unless it be in the form of the Building, with Bells, Clock, &c. If it be still said, that the Appropriation of some places principally to Worship, gives any Advantage to the Worship perform'd there; I answer, that that is to make Worship depend on an accident, the Will of Man, who can pull down a Church in one place, and set it up in another where he thinks fit; and is so far from being warranted by Scripture, that it is plainly contradictory to it.

His next argument for Publick Baptism, that is, for Baptism at the Font, is from the nature and design of Baptism, which bespeaks it publick; which is admission into the Christian Church, which ought to be done openly. I grant this to be a good reason for Publick Baptism in my sense, that is, Baptism before a Witness or Witnesses, which I call Baptism openly; but not at all for Publick Baptism in his sense, till it can be shewn what fix'd number of People, above two, is necessary to make it Publick Baptism; and then to shew that that Number is to be had always at the Font, and never at a Private House; or else make Baptism be call'd publick from something else besides a number of People.

His Third particular is, *That Baptism contains a Publick profession of our Faith. Now the more publick it is, the more agreeable is it to the Nature of our Baptism. And when can it possibly*
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be more publick than in the Courts of the Lords House; the Publick Congregation for God's Worship, held by Publick Authority in places publickly set apart? &c. These are words fitted for nothing but to deceive; for the word publick being not yet determin'd to a particular Number of Men, may as well stand for one number as another; and consequently for the Number Two, as well as Two Thousand; as the word Church may stand for Two as well as Two Thousand. But here is one thing in this that I have quoted which requires notice, as if *publick Authority*, by which he means the *Law of the Land*, gave any *Validity* to the Sacrament of Baptism, whereupon it lies upon him to prove that the Magistrate has any Legislative Authority in Religion, to determine for his Subjects any thing relating to the Doctrine, Discipline or Worship; any further than to see that nothing be done to the prejudice of the Publick.

Thus I have impartially examin'd Mr. *Stubs's* Sermon, and do hope to add to that light, which does every day more and more break forth upon us, which has been kept under in this Kingdom by that Unchristian Tyranny practic'd upon the Minds and Consciences of Men, in allowing of no Worship but that of the Church of *England*, under severe Penalties, and in keeping the Press as an Engine fit only for one side; whereas God be thanked, since the Accession of King *William* to the Throne of these Realms, by the almost universal resistance of the whole Kingdom to Tyranny and Oppression; not only our properties are secured, but we may think as we will, speak as we will, Write as we will, Act as we will, in all things not inconsistent with the Peace and Quiet of the State; and consequently, Authority in matters of Religion must fail among us, which is directly opposite to all those Glorious things we now enjoy; and God grant we may do so long, to the disappointment of all those, who though they want the Power, want not the Will to enslave all Mankind.

F I N I S.

